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ABSTRACT

In recognition of the fact that there are individual differences and preferences among teachers, the teachers at the Las Posas School in Camarillo, California were given the opportunity to use the methods they found most comfortable. This resulted in a variety of open classroom situations, with alternatives for parents, students, and teachers. This paper describes two open classroom situations presently in operation at Las Posas. One is a fifth/sixth grade program; the other combines first and second grades. Six classroom teachers work together in the intermediate program. Teaching, grouping, projects, and activities are done across grade levels and class lines. Classrooms are used in whatever way enhances the teaching and learning activity being done. The primary program is ungraded with no emphasis on age or grade. Two teachers are assisted by parent volunteers and cross-age tutors. Areas of study (language arts, math, spelling, printing, creative writing, research, science, vocabulary, geography, art, music, construction, cooking, sewing, drama, French, and Spanish) are individualized, with students working on a weekly contract basis. Appended to the paper are various forms used in the open classes. (DDO)

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OPENING UP WITHOUT CRACKING UP

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LAS POSAS SCHOOL
F. J. Fuchs, Principal
Camarillo, California

ACT II PRIMARY TEAM

Betty Austen
Sue Waldo
Meg Loretta
Marcia Gordon
Carrie Lou Kessel

ACT I INTERMEDIATE TEAM

Maggie Erickson
Claude Hickman
Lola Smith

WHY WE INDIVIDUALIZED

There are as many ways of teaching an individualized classroom as there are teachers at Las Posas School. Some of us like structure, some don't. Some work well in teams, some work better alone. Some of us like trying new ideas, some would rather work with an already proven idea. Some like large groups of students, some like small groups.

The result of being given the opportunity to use the method we feel most comfortable with has been a variety of "open classroom" situations, alternatives for parents and students, and teachers who haven't cracked under the strain!

Two "open classroom" situations are presently in operation, which are an example of the freedom we have to choose our own style. The fifth-sixth grade program has evolved through trial and error over several years. Programs and innovations that have worked have survived. It is basically a shared teaching situation. The first-

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second grade program was planned and prepared for ahead of time. It makes wide use of learning centers and parent aides. It has been in operation since September.

INTERMEDIATE TEAM (GRADES: FIVE AND SIX)

The present fifth-sixth grade program had its beginnings four years ago, when three sixth grade teachers began to share some teaching responsibilities. First it was only showing movies to all three classes at one time. We started because of the necessity of sharing a projector, but we continued because we began to see value in sharing. From that beginning the program has grown until now teaching responsibilities in all fifth and sixth grades are shared across grade levels, classes are grouped and individualized, walls are opened - and shut!!

In attempting to describe our situation we realized, however, that the uniqueness of the program is not in the schedule or setting or grouping, but in the moods and feelings.

THERE IS A MOOD OF COOPERATION

There are six classroom teachers working together (three teaching fifth/sixth grade classes in an open quadrivium, one in a single fifth/sixth classroom, one in a sixth classroom, and one in a fifth/fourth classroom). Cooperating with these classroom teachers is a Reading Resource teacher, the E.H. teacher, and principal. Each child is assigned to a teacher, who maintains

THERE IS A MOOD OF COOPERATION (cont.)

primary administrative responsibility for that child. The educational program is carried on by all the teachers working together.

THERE IS A MOOD OF SUPPORT AND TRUST FOR EACH OTHER

We have begun to recognize that we don't "own" a particular class or child. We try to support each other as we relate to the students and they to us. We realize that we can't relate equally well alone to all the students assigned to us, but that together we are more likely to meet their needs.

We also are free to recognize that no one of us teaches all subjects equally well, so we have worked out ways to let us teach the subjects we enjoy the most. Our egos are not on the line, and we work to compliment each others teaching strengths.

THERE IS A FEELING OF INTERACTION IN A VARIETY OF WAYS

Teaching is carried on across class lines and across grade level lines. For instance, Social Studies is basically taught to all fifth/sixth grades by one teacher, with others assisting. This is accomplished by grouping the students in various ways, and by other teachers assisting.

Grouping is done across class and grade level lines also. This is especially apparent in Reading. Four classes of fifth/sixth graders are grouped by testing, so that regardless of grade level, a child can read individually or with others on the same level.

Projects cross grade level and class lines. The Science Fair is a good example of this interaction. Social Studies projects are also done by students working together, with little regard for who is in which class.

Activities such a Folk Dancing, Singing, participating in productions such as "Fiddler on the Roof" are scheduled so that all c[illegible] join.

TRIAL AND ERROR IS AN ACCEPTABLE METHOD

There is a mood of openness to new ideas. If we have thought it out and agree it has some merit, we try it. We all feel free to evaluate it, and change it, or drop it. We thought a long time before we began to open the walls in the quad. Sometimes we thought we'd gone too far, and slammed them shut! But over a period of some years we've seen the value, and the end result has been wide open walls, quieter classrooms, more interaction, and better work!

PROGRAM PRECEDES STRUCTURE

We have developed a mood which says our purpose or function will determine the form or the setting. Our classrooms are used in whatever way enhances the teaching and learning. In the quad walls are used when the program demands an activity in a small space, or with lots of wall space.

PROGRAM PRECEDES STRUCTURE (cont.)

An example would be the Science Fair, when we needed additional wall space for exhibits. The walls and room become educational tools used by the students.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT IS A KEY FACTOR

We have tried to create a setting in which the needs of both students and teachers are important. We help each other learn to like ourselves, to do the best job we can, and to be increasingly aware of other people.

ENTHUSIASM IS A VITAL ELEMENT

The feeling of enthusiasm among the students was especially high as they completed oral "How-to-do" reports. Many had demonstrated their ability to follow written directions by using a recipe, and cooking something in front of their class. Then they chose the best nine to do theirs again for the whole quad - and thereby created their own Christmas Party!

The teachers are equally as enthusiastic! Teaching has never been boring here! Hard work, challenging, tiring, exciting, but surely never boring!

PRIMARY TEAM (GRADES: ONE AND TWO)

The Las Posas Primary teachers decided to develop an individualized instructional program that included a variety of environmental settings. This included multi-age, team teaching, open classrooms and a variety of teaching strategies.

ORGANIZATION OF THE PROGRAM

An instructional program was written by the team members and presented to the Board of Education for approval. The program was approved and money allocated for carpeting and remodeling of two rooms to form the open classroom.

VOLUNTEER AIDE PROGRAM

It was agreed by the team members that in order for the program to succeed parents should be involved as volunteer aides. The reading resource teacher and a parent became coordinators for the volunteer aide and cross-age tutor programs. This was organized as follows:

1. The public was informed of the program by school newsletter, radio and local newspaper.
2. A get acquainted coffee/tea was given for interested adults; an after school meeting was held for the prospective student aides.

VOLUNTEER AIDE PROGRAM (cont.)

3. Two orientation meetings were given. The first was to distribute and review the Volunteer Aide Handbook and explain procedures. An aide quiz was given to evaluate how the individual would react in a given situation within the classroom. This quiz was used for placement of aides and inservice planning. The second meeting was a review of class procedures and a training session of the use of A-V equipment. Subsequent meetings were used to review procedure, the use of equipment, duties and current problems.
4. After the first meeting for aides the teachers met with the coordinator to discuss desired procedures and give input for particular assignments for aides. A master classroom schedule for volunteer aides was formed at this time.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE OPEN CLASSROOM

A wall adjoining first and second grade rooms was partially removed. The sink area was left and used as a cooking area. The coat room was cut down to four feet high to provide an office area allowing an isolated work space for the children. Wall-to-wall carpeting was installed to absorb noise and one wall was papered with a floral vinyl to match the carpeting.

Two teachers were assigned to this room of first and second graders. It was decided that the room would be ungraded with no emphasis on age or grade.

Half of the student desks were removed, the other half were used as learning centers. To house materials at the centers, cardboard displays from stores were collected and painted. Areas of study were individualized and pupils learned to work on weekly contracts. Some areas of study were required daily (reading, math, etc.) but once the minimum requirement was achieved the children were free to select any area of study.

The learning centers were organized as follows:

1. LANGUAGE ARTS
    a. Scholastics Individualized Reading Program
    b. Basal Readers
    c. Read-a-long tapes and books
    d. Eye, Ear, Hand Phonics Tapes and study sheets
    e. Ideal Phonics and Structual Analysis Tapes and work sheets
    f. Periodicals; magazines, newspapers and follow up sheets
    g. Class Library

2. MATH

   a. Teacher-made math continuum

   b. Tapes

   c. Games

   d. Task Cards

   e. Manipulative materials

   f. Telling Time Station

   g. Measurement Station

3. SPELLING

   a. Cassette tapes

   b. Kottmeyer books

   c. Lippincott books

4. PRINTING

   a. Individual strip printing charts

   b. Plastic name holders

   c. State text

5. CREATIVE WRITING

   a. Student Dictionaries

   b. Story Starters

   c. Charts and Pictures

   d. Ginn English books

6. RESEARCH

   a. PreEncyclopedia with task cards

   b. Children's Encyclopedias

7. SCIENCE

   a. Tapes

   b. Books

   c. Collections

   d. Filmstrips

   e. Science Kits

   f. Microscope

   g. Telephones with task cards

8. VOCABULARY

   a. Game Boards

   b. Published Games

   c. Flap Stacks

9. GEOGRAPHY

   a. Maps, Gloves & published materials

   b. Teacher-made neighborhood maps

   c. Map puzzles

   d. Student-made maps

   e. Teacher-made felt board maps with moveable labels

10. ART

   a. Paints, crayons, chalk

   b. Clay

   c. Easels, brushes, paint smocks

   d. Wallpaper books, magazines, newspapers, fabric scrapes

11. MUSIC

   a. Music Books

   b. Threshold to Music Charts

   c. Hand instruments

   d. Records & tapes

12. CONSTRUCTION
    a. Wood & fabric scraps, glue, nails
    b. Paper Airplanes - Instruction (books and plan sheets)
    c. Misc. throwaway scraps
13. COOKING
    a. Dishes & cooking utensils
    b. Portable electric over, skillet, toaster, waffle iron
14. SEWING
    a. Sewing equipment, ie: scissors, pins, needles, thread
    b. Patterns & instruction sheets
    c. Fabric scraps
15. DRAMA
    a. Puppet theatre with puppets
    b. Dress up clothes & jewelry
    c. Flannel boards & cutouts
16. FRENCH & SPANISH

ALTERNATIVE CLASSROOMS

As an alternative to the completely ungraded first-second classroom we have separate first grade and separate second grade self-contained situations as well as a self-contained first-second in another room. These classrooms are utilizing similar programs with individualization in the reading and math areas as well as the use of volunteer aides, both student and adult, as an integral part of these programs.

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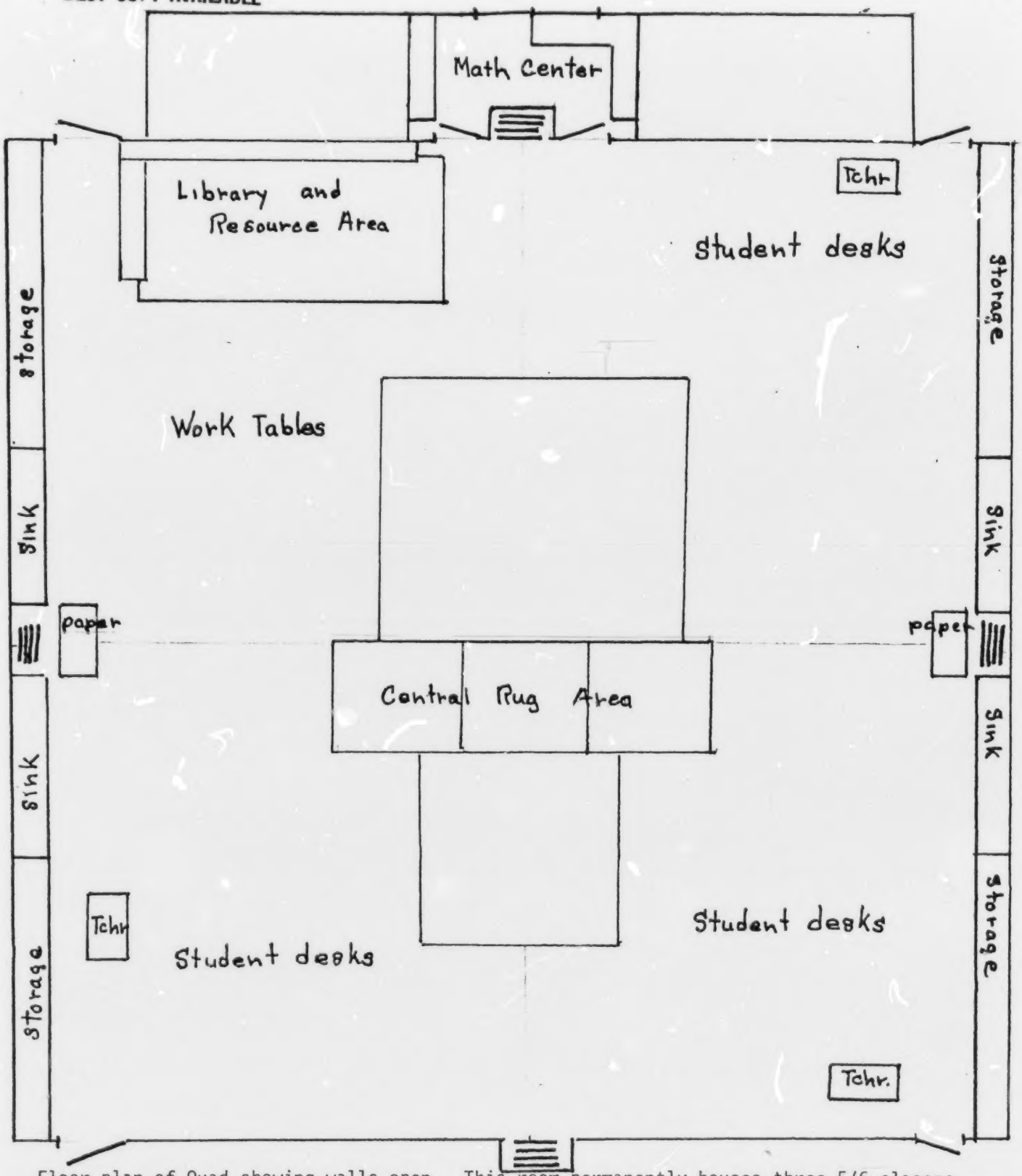

Floor plan of Quad showing walls open. This room permanently houses three 5/6 classes and three teachers. In addition, other classes meet here for Math and Reading. It is used as a center for Social Studies and Science projects and exhibits. It is also used for folk dancing and music by several 5/6 classes.

DO'S & DON'TS

1. Do be flexible!
2. Do start with short term goals (We will work on contract for 1 hour as apposed to from now on forever)
3. Don't put your ego on the line!
4. Do laugh at yourself - even once in awhile!
5. Don't believe your way is the only way!
6. Do believe your way is right for you.
7. Do listen to parent's suggestions.
8. Do listen to pupil's suggestions.
9. Don't be threatened by busy noise.
10. Don't be threatend by open spaces.
11. Don't be afraid of making a mistake and admitting it.
12. Don't give up if you really believe you have a good idea.
13. Do develop your own teaching strength.
14. Do let others have an opportunity to develop their teaching strength.
15. Do feel pride in team accomplishments.
16. Do develop an interest in children as individuals.
17. Do enjoy a changing environment that meets the needs of each new group.
18. Don't believe because a plan worked last year it will work this year.
19. Don't be afraid to take a constructive backseat. You don't need the spotlight on yourself every minute.
20. Don't be a schedule worshipper unless you really want that ulcer.
21. Develop out of school interests to maintain your sanity.
22. Do remember that all the people in your team, students, teachers, and parents, must be included in your definition of individualization.

SOCCER SEASON EVALUATION

A. I believe that the following ten players qualify as the best players of this soccer season. Not only were they excellent in the skills of soccer, they were also excellent sports.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

B. I believe that _____ was the most effective captain of the soccer season.

C. I believe that _____ was the best goalie.

D. I consider _____ the best goal maker.

E. I consider the following five people to be the most improved players of the soccer season.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

INDEPENDENT P.E. PROGRAM EVALUATION

A. I consider the following people to have been the best sports of our season.

1. _____
2. _____

B. I consider the following people to have been the best players of our season.

1. _____
2. _____

C. _____ was the best captain of the season.

D. The following people were the most improved players of the season.

1. _____
2. _____

SCIENCE PROJECT RECORD

A. NAME: _____

B. PROJECT TITLE: _____

C. GENERAL OBJECTIVES: _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

D. MATERIALS NEEDED:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

E. DAILY PROGRAM RECORD

DATE	PLANNED ACTIVITY	WORK COMPLETED	TIME
MON:			
TUES:			
WED:			
THURS:			
FRI:			
MON:			
TUES:			
WED:			
THURS:			
FRI:			

F. EVALUATION OF EFFORT:

1. I feel I used my time effectively during the past four weeks.
2. Generally I used my time effectively, but I did waste quite a bit of time.
3. I did not put my time to good use.

PROJECT PROGRESS RECORD

A. NAME _____

B. PROJECT TITLE _____

C. GENERAL OBJECTIVES:

DURING THE NEXT FOUR WEEKS I WILL COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING TASKS:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

D. MATERIAL NEEDS:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

E. DAILY PROGRESS RECORD

DATE	PLANNED ACTIVITY	WORK COMPLETED	TIME
MONDAY			
TUESDAY			
WEDNES			
THURS			
FRI			
MONDAY			
TUESDAY			
WEDNES			
THURS			
FRI			
MONDAY			
TUESDAY			
WEDNES			
THURS			
FRI			
MONDAY			
TUESDAY			
WEDNES			
THURS			
FRI			

SOCIAL STUDIES COMMITTEE GOALS

During the next five weeks the _____ committee is planning the following activities for our group presentation:
(Underline the name of the person who will have the chief responsibility for the activities.)

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES	STUDENTS INVOLVED	ESTIMATE OF TIME NEEDED FOR COMPLETETION

WEEKLY MATH CONTRACT

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

	PLANNED WORK	WORK COMPLETED	PRESENT CONTRACT
MON.			
TUES.			
WED.			
THURS.			
FRI.			

	PLANNED WORK	WORK COMPLETED	PRESENT CONTRACT
MON.			
TUES.			
WED.			
THURS.			
FRI.			

	PLANNED WORK	WORK COMPLETED	PRESENT CONTRACT
MON.			
TUES.			
WED.			
THURS.			
FRI.			

A. My work habits for the past three weeks were:
   1. Excellent 2. Very Good 3. Good 4. Poor

B. My work performance for the past three weeks in math was:
   1. Outstanding 2. Very Good 3. Good 4. Needs Improvement

C. List three things that would help to improve your math performance next week.

   1. _____

   2. _____

   3. _____

LAS POSAS SCHOOL
75 Calle La Guerra
Camarillo, California 93010
Telephone: (805) 482-4606

Office of the Principal

May 31, 1974

Dear Fourth and Fifth Grade Parents:

Attached is a proposed educational plan for your child's grade level for next year, grades five and six. The plan is designed for greater implementation of diagnostic-prescriptive individualized instruction in reading, mathematics and language arts.

In this unique plan room composition will be determined by random grouping taking into consideration each child's needs and parent's request.

It would be appreciated if you would evaluate the attached proposal prior to a general meeting to be held on Monday, June 3, at 7:30 p.m. in the school library. At this time the staff in grades five and six will discuss the program with you. It might be helpful to record your suggestions on this copy as you read it. In any event bring this plan to the meeting.

Please come on Monday, June 3, to participate and offer constructive suggestions prior to implementation of the program.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Lee
Mr. Wiley
Mr. Williams
Mrs. Smith
Mr. Hickman
Mrs. Erickson
Mr. F. J. Fuchs
Mrs. Doornbos

QUARTERLY INFORMATION PROFILE OF: _____

A. READING ..... GROUP _____ BOOK _____

B. ENGLISH

1. WRITTEN EXPRESSION
   a. LANGUAGE TEXT
   b. CREATIVE WRITING
2. ORAL EXPRESSION
3. HANDWRITING
4. SPELLING

C. MATHEMATICS ..... LEVEL _____ CONTRACT _____

D. SOCIAL STUDIES

E. SCIENCE/HEALTH

F. PHYSICAL EDUCATION

G. ART/MUSIC

H. ATTITUDE AND EFFORT

LAS POSAS SCHOOL
75 Calle La Guerra
Camarillo, California 93010
Telephone: (805) 482-4606

Office of the Principal

PARENT CONFERENCE INVITATION

To the parents of:

The elementary schools in the Pleasant Valley School District report the progress of pupils through conferences and written progress reports. Parents of pupils in all elementary grades will have a conference at the end of the first and third quarters. A progress report will be sent home at the end of the second and last quarters for grades one through six.

The following time has been reserved for a conference with regard to your child's progress.

_____ at _____ p.m.

We are scheduling conferences for parents of sixth graders in small groups lasting approximately ½ hour in order to more easily relate to you your child's progress in terms of expectations, achievements, and involvements in the total group. All three teachers will be a part of the confernce and will also be available for individual questions. We sincerely hope it will be possible for you to participate in your child's conference as scheduled. In addition, we will be available by appointment Monday thru Thursday from 3:30 - 4:00 p.m. Please call the school office.

Mrs. Smith
Mr. Hickman
Mrs. Erickson

Please tear off this portion and return to the teacher.

Check one:

___ I plan to be present on _____ _____
Date Time

____ I cannot come at the above time but will come the following day.

_____ _____
Student's name Parent's name

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LAS POSAS SCHOOL

NAME _____

GRADE 5/6 DATE _____

	O	S	NI
READING			
SPELLING...UNIT			
CREATIVE WRITING			
HANDWRITING			
LANGUAGE (STRUCTURAL)			
MATHEMATICS			
ART/MUSIC			
SCIENCE/HEALTH			
SOCIAL STUDIES			
BOOK REPORTS			
GOOD USE OF TIME			
SELF-CONTROL			

COMMENTS: _____

O - OUTSTANDING

S - SATISFACTORY

NI - NEEDS IMPROVEMENT